

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. **(currently amended).** A device for [detecting and storing digital] obtaining of pictures by means of a digital camera over an extended range of brightness values comprising :

(a) image detector means for resolving an image into pixels and for [the generation of] generating for each pixel first digital picture data indicative of the brightness of said image at said pixel, said image detector means having a dynamic range extending over a first number of digits[,];

(b) a picture data memory[,];

(c) signal processing means including means for [generating, from said first digital picture data, second picture data representing a relatively dark picture and third picture data representing a relatively bright picture] reading from said image detector means a second number of relatively low significance digits as second digital picture data and a third number of relatively high significance digits as third digital picture data, said second and third numbers being smaller than said first number[.]; and

(d) means for storing said second digital picture data as a “dark” picture and said third digital picture data as a “bright” picture in said picture data memory.

2. **(cancelled)**

3. **(currently amended).** A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said signal processing means further comprise picture balancing means for optimizing [the picture data of said dark and bright pictures] the pictures generated by said second and third picture data.

4. **(original)** A device as claimed in claim 3, wherein said picture balancing means comprise means for providing digital histogram of data from a previously taken picture and means for balancing said picture data relative to said histogram.

5. **(original)** A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein said histogram contains color value data.

6. **(original)** A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein said histogram contains gray value data.

7. **(original)** A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein said histogram contains brightness value data.

8. **(currently amended).** A device as claimed in claim 1, [and] further comprising mixing means for superimposing said pictures generated by said second and third picture data [dark and bright pictures].

9. **(currently amended).** A method for taking pictures by means of a digital camera over an extended range of brightness values [detecting and storing digital pictures by means of a digital camera, wherein at least two digital pictures having different degrees of brightness are generated] comprising the steps of:

[-] resolving an image into pixels, each pixel being represented by first picture data indicative of brightness of the pixel and having a first number of digits;

[-] reading from said first picture data a second number of digits having a relatively low significance as second picture data [and] [,];

[-] storing said second picture data as a “dark” picture[,];

[-] reading from said first picture data a third number of digits having a relatively high significance as third picture data[,]; and

[-] storing said third picture data as a “bright” picture.

10. **(currently amended).** A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a [the] step of balancing [the] gray values of said picture data of said “dark” and “bright” pictures with a gray value histogram of a previously taken picture.

11. **(currently amended).** A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a [the] step of balancing [the] color values of said picture data of said “dark” and “bright” pictures with a color value histogram of a previously taken picture.

12. **(currently amended).** A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a [the] step of balancing [the] brightness values of said picture data of said “dark” and “bright” pictures with a brightness value histogram of a previously taken picture.

13. **(currently amended).** A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a [the] step of balancing [the] contrast values of said picture data of said “dark” and “bright” pictures with a contrast value histogram of a previously taken picture

14. **(currently amended).** A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein digital picture data of said two digital “dark” and “bright” pictures [having different degrees of brightness] are mixed to provide a superimposed digital [pictures] picture.